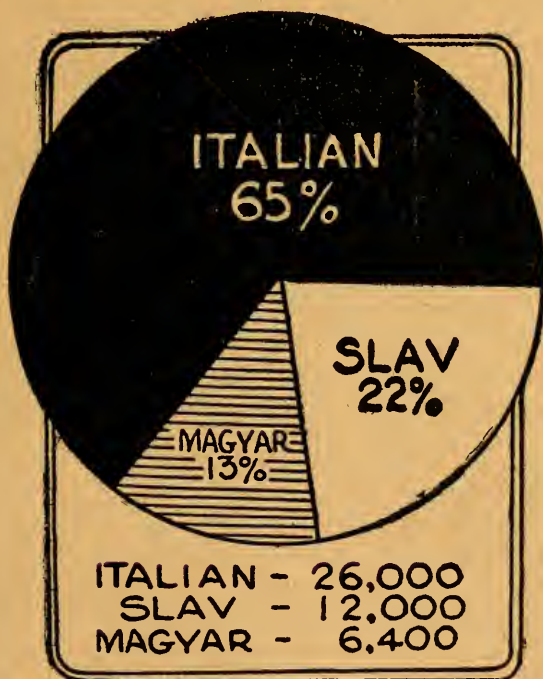


# FIUME

The Superlatively  
Italian City



By  
**HENRY I. HAZELTON**  
817 North Dearborn St., Chicago  
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# FIUME

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## FOREWORD

**I**T IS not Italy which demands Fiume, but Fiume which demands annexation to Italy for the protection of its own interests, and to meet the wishes of its citizens, composed for the greater part of Italians, as the following graphic statistics will show. Even before the Italian troops entered the city, the National Council of Fiume, in an extraordinary session held on October 30, 1918, voted voluntarily for the annexation of the city to the kingdom of Italy.

¶ At a plebiscite held in the following November the population of Fiume, taking advantage of the principle of self-determination propounded by President Wilson, ratified the decision of the National Council, and reasserted its decision to be united to the mother country, Italy.

¶ The Italian government in view of this signal example of self-determination could not refuse to second the wish of the city of Fiume, and ever with due regard to the principle professed by President Wilson, it asked the Peace Conference for the annexation of Fiume to Italy.

¶ The request of the Italian government was made with the knowledge that it did not conflict with the other principle of President Wilson, who wishes to assure every country its own outlet to the sea.

¶ A glance at the map of the Adriatic will demonstrate that Jugo Slavia, composed of Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro has large and numerous sea-ports whether the countries are considered separately or as a new state. They are sufficient for all its present and future

requirements, and are connected with the inland country behind them by excellent railways and roads, capable of development to meet any needs.

¶ On the coast of Croatia the Jugo Slavs are in full control of the ports of Buccari, Porto Re, Jabanac and Segna. The last is larger, if not developed more than Fiume. On the Dalmatian coast they will have the ports of Spalato, Almissa, Makarska, Ragusa and Cattaro. The last has a military and trade importance equal to any harbor of the Mediterranean. On the Montenegrin coast they have the use of the harbors of Antivari and Dulcigno, where the most important arteries of communication of Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro have their termini.

¶ If Fiume were indispensable to Jugo Slavia, Italy would have sacrificed the city to the economic necessity of her neighbors, as she did in fact in the case of the wholly Italian city of Spalato which, likewise, through a plebiscite, asked for annexation to Italy, but was voluntarily relinquished to Jugo Slavia only for the reason that the port was considered indispensable to the commercial future of the new state.

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¶ Mr. Henry I. Hazelton, who has studied the Fiume question dispassionately, with the analytical objective, which is a prerogative of American writers, in the following pages demonstrates to those who would like a more intimate knowledge of the problem of Fiume, the historical, political, social and economic reasons, which should decide the fate of Fiume, and which we have set forth succinctly in this foreword.

# FIUME

## The Superlatively Italian City

By HENRY I. HAZELTON

**I**N OFFERING American readers a summary of the issues involved in deciding the fate of Fiume, the superlatively Italian city, which has been the most disturbing factor of the peace conference in Paris, I shall not confine myself to what might be regarded as the Italian point of view. I shall rather set forth the problem in the clearest manner possible, depending wholly on facts and documents of the highest political and social character, the authenticity of which cannot be questioned.

¶ Contrary to what appears to be a common opinion, and contrary to the assertions of the Jugo Slavs, the Italian right to Fiume is not based upon any interpretation of public or secret treaties. Much less is it founded on inopportune imperialistic aspirations on the part of the Italian people. It is a historic and national tradition which springs from a common soil and blood. It is, moreover, peculiarly a democratic privilege of free peoples. It rests upon the right to self-determination, the one outstanding doctrine characteristic of the Fourteen Points of President Wilson.

¶ The assertion of this principle as a basis for enduring peace was acclaimed by the democratic conscience of the world. The powers recently at war with Italy and her allies promptly added the seal of their approval without a dissenting word. It received its first practical application with the full approval of the Peace Conference, when Croatia, Slavonia,



Bosnia and Herzegovina, defeated, if not conquered countries, seeking to escape the full penalties of the collapse of Austria, exercised the right of self-determination and called for annexation to Serbia.

### San Marino a Self-Determined State

¶ Italy was one of the first countries to respect the right to self-determination. Her whole history in the Middle Ages is the history of small, self-determined states. She recognized the principle in 1859, when Savoy and Nice were ceded to France after plebiscites enabled the people to decide their course; and again in 1861, when the little republic of San Marino, by a plebiscite, expressed the wish of its inhabitants not to form a part of the new kingdom of Victor Emmanuel II. Therefore, it was not a new experience for Italy when Fiume signally manifested its acceptance of the principle. The city held a plebiscite in November, 1918, just before the armistice was signed, at which eighty per cent of the inhabitants voluntarily voted for annexation to Italy.

¶ If the Peace Conference sanctioned the right to self-determination of the new group of Jugo Slav states, why would it now withhold the same right from Fiume, which has been hallowed by centuries of struggle against hated oppressors and martyrdom in the cause of freedom, through all of which the unquenchable flame of love for Italy has burst forth anew at each successive crisis in the city's history?

¶ Against the sovereign will of the people of Fiume no considerations of any other kind should be permitted to prevail. Their plebiscite should be considered decisive, and their resolve unalterable. It is not Italy who disputes the right of the Peace Conference to dispose of Fiume. It is Fiume, because Fiume revolts at the thought of being made a part of Jugo Slavia. It is Fiume which demands the precious right to self-determination, and has invoked in support of this right the help of President Wilson, who propounded the sacred principle in his Fourteen Points.

¶ An analysis of the plebiscite of Fiume, a copy of which was presented to President Wilson in Paris recently by the Municipal Council, led by the Mayor, Dr. Vicio, and a political delegation from the district, headed by the Hungarian deputy, Ossionak, ought to be sufficient proof that the annexation of Fiume to Italy is not asked by the Italian element alone. The Italians in Fiume represent, according to the most authoritative statistics, compiled by the Austrian authorities and accepted by the Jugo Slavs, sixty per cent of the population.

Since the plebiscite of last November gave a total of eighty per cent voting for annexation, it is not demanded by the Italians alone, but by the foreign element as well.

### Oppositions for Two Reasons

¶ Opposition to the claims of Italy may be placed in two categories. On one hand it was held that Fiume should be assigned to Jugo Slavia, because it is geographically and historically Croatian, and because it never has been a part of Italy. On the other hand, it was argued that Fiume should be given to Jugo Slavia because it is that new country's only outlet to the sea, and should serve, as President Wilson maintained in his statement of April 24 last, "as an outlet, not for the trade of Italy, but of the countries which lie to the north and northeast—Hungary, Bohemia, Rumania and the states of the new Jugo Slav group."

¶ Regarding the historic right of Italy to Fiume, it is enough to say the objection that Fiume never has formed a part of Italy is without force. Everyone with any knowledge of European history knows that before Italy was united, no Italian city formed a part of Italy, politically speaking. For centuries Italy was nothing more than a "geographical expression," divided into fragments among princes and small rulers of Italian nationality, or subject to the dominion of foreign states or potentates. Political Italy, or to use a more common expression—Italian unity—has been a development of recent years, which began to take tangible shape in 1859. It went on through an uninterrupted series of wars and revolutions which brought out the most sublime examples of patriotic sacrifice, heroism and martyrdom. These events are cherished by all persons of Italian blood as their title to glory and to a place among the nations. In modern times they find their only parallel in the early struggles of the American colonies to be free.

¶ If a similar reasoning should be followed, it would raise the same doubts about the Italianism of Trieste, Venice, Milan, and of all the other cities ruled by Austria down to 1866. Before that time they did not form part of political Italy, for the innocent reason that it did not exist.

¶ While Fiume never has formed a part of Italy, it has remained Italian ever since its foundation 1,100 years ago. Rising on the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Tarsica destroyed by Charlemagne in 800, it never once has lost its pure Italian character. This is attested by all its artistic monuments and intellectual life, by all the acts of its adminis-

trative and business life, which with its language, laws and habits have preserved its complete Italianism in every age of its existence.

### Always Called by Its Italian Name

¶ The name of "Ricka," by which it is designated by the Croats, a translation of river, never has appeared in any geography. On all maps, in all treaties, in all laws, in all protocols, Fiume always has been called Fiume, the Italian word for river, with all due respect to what is said by the recent Jugo Slav geographers. The fact that Fiume, while not belonging to Italy, has remained wholly Italian for over a thousand years, is the strongest proof which could be adduced to my mind, that it is an Italian city.

¶ In the political and business life of Fiume, the Croats always have been looked upon as strangers. After successfully resisting a Croat invasion in the first period of its reconstruction, Fiume ever preserved its separate character, as a free city, with laws exactly like those of every other Italian city down to 1776, or until Maria Theresa incorporated it with Hungary.

¶ In 1848, Jelacitch, Ban of Croatia, took Fiume from Hungary, and annexed the city to his own country. Croatia kept possession for nineteen years, but never succeeded in crushing out the proud and fiery Italian spirit of the inhabitants. They overcame the fierce persecutions of their new masters, and succeeded in throwing off the hated yoke of Croatia, whereupon the city was united once more to Hungary.

### Trumbitch Resorts to Forged Documents

¶ Mr. Trumbitch, in order to support the historic right of Croatia to Fiume, has related to the peace conference a specious story about the convention of 1868 which took Fiume from Croatia, and restored it to Hungary as a separate part of the sacred crown of the kingdom. From this it would appear that the Hungarians falsified the laws of the convention, pasting over the original context a strip of paper on which they arbitrarily inscribed legal enactments in their own favor. In order to prove his case Mr. Trumbitch offered a photograph of this forged document. (See next page.)

¶ To his explanation, one might reply promptly that Hungary, and Fiume, much less, never have had to resort to deception to prove the ancient rights of the free city. Besides





the aforesaid protocol of the convention, there exists a law of the Hungarian parliament, No. 30, enacted the same year, in which paragraph 66, recalling the fundamental principles of Maria Theresa's charter granted in 1779, reaffirms the document in favor of Fiume; and defines its rights and sovereignty clearly and precisely. It declares "the city, the harbor and the district of Fiume constitute a separate body politic annexed to the Hungarian crown."

### Croats Admitted Independence of Fiume

¶ The assent of Croatia is not lacking. On November 16, 1868, the law enacted by the Hungarian parliament, as well as the protocol signed by the Emperor, were read in the diet of Croatia, which decided to give the maximum of publicity to the sovereign decree that all the deputies might examine it. The next day the debate was opened. Only two deputies, Antonio Stovanovitch and Giovanni Zivkovitch, spoke against it. Deputies Roberto Zlatarevitch and Miroslavo Karljevitch proposed that the diet accept the law in its entirety, and the diet finally voted to do so almost unanimously.

¶ With such a premise, it would appear almost absurd at this time to attack the validity of the documents mentioned, since they quite establish the Italian right to Fiume. That right is bound closely, not only to the national character of the city which is included within the Alpine barrier, the Creator erected, and history ever has acknowledged as the natural boundary of Italy. It rests also upon the principle of self-determination asserted by the city itself, being peopled mostly by Italians. This right was recognized not only by the protocol and the law enacted by the Hungarian parliament in 1868, afterward approved by the Croatian diet, and by the charter of Maria Theresa. It traces its origin back to the municipal law of Rome, and comes down through the ages to find its confirmation in the Ferdinandeian constitution of 1530; the Fiume law of 1872 and more recently in the Wilsonian doctrine of the self-determination of small peoples.

### Jugo Slavia Never Used Fiume

¶ Again in reply, I will say that Fiume is not the only, or the most important maritime outlet of the new group of Jugo Slav states. They will get coasts of Croatia, Dalmatia and Montenegro 450 miles long, affording ample anchorages, roadsteads and harbors for all purposes. All are connected with the hinterland by good highways and railroads. Before the war they were almost the only trade routes of the present Jugo Slav countries.



¶ Fiume never was, and never could be the natural outlet of Jugo Slavia. One look at a map of the Adriatic will convince anyone of this. Fiume is on the upper coast and is the natural outlet for the people living north and northeast of the city—that is of Hungary, Carniola, Austria proper, the new Czechoslovak state and Ukrania. With all of these countries it has ample railroad connections and good highways for wheeled vehicles.

¶ Jugo Slavia, lying almost wholly east and southeast of Fiume, does not offer one convenient route to the coast by way of Fiume. It is cut off, not only by difficulties of communication, but because to ship by way of Fiume would increase the distance to be covered in order to reach the Mediterranean markets. It would be as if Georgia and South Carolina should prefer Baltimore to Savannah or Charleston in shipping goods to the Caribbean sea. This is borne out by the fact that in the past those countries made little use of the port of Fiume.

¶ Going over the harbor statistics for the last ten years, it is seen that the commerce of Croatia passing through Fiume represents only seven per cent of the total, while of the entire trade of Croatia, Slavonia, Carniola, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia, only thirteen per cent passed through the port of Fiume.

¶ These statistics were given to the Peace Conference by the Italian delegates in Paris.

### Spalato Center for the Wine Trade

¶ Without reckoning the Croatian ports of Buccari and Segna, the latter with a capacity and possibilities of development far greater than those of Fiume, the coast of Dalmatia offers the hinterland harbor facilities far greater than any present needs or future development will require. Chief among them is Spalato; although wholly Italian, like most of the other cities of the littoral, it has been conceded to Jugo Slavia voluntarily by Italy, as it is regarded as the most advantageous point of shipment the new state could have. Its possession will insure the commercial and industrial development of the fertile hinterland.

¶ Spalato is the center of the wine trade on the Dalmatian coast, while Fiume is surrounded by barren limestone rocks, poorly watered, and affording a scant supply of food to the peasants, who till their little patches of filled-in gardens to points far up the mountain sides.

¶ The importance of Spalato harbor was recognized before and during the war by Austria. While hostilities were in progress the naval authorities at Trieste sent a commission to determine its availability as the site of a strong naval base to support the fleet, if it should not be thought advisable to establish a big naval harbor at Porto Paludi with its back toward the mercantile harbor.

¶ Diocletian's name is forever linked with that of Spalato. The emperor who gave Rome its last word of pomp and magnificence laid aside his diadem at 59 to dwell as a private citizen near the place where his father and mother had lived as slaves. The palace he built in this favored place covered nine and a half acres, and its walls still inclose the greater part of the Italian city. Many of the buildings he erected remain to attest the splendor which Diocletian carried with him even into his retreat.

### Many Harbors on the Narenta

¶ Those who are unconvinced will get a still broader idea of the generous treatment accorded to Jugo Slavia by continuing their studies of the coast. The imperial aspirations of the Jugo Slavs masquerading under the cry for outlets to the sea will be understood somewhat better after a glance at the numerous harbors, which in addition to Buccari, Segna and Spalato, remain indisputably in their hands.

¶ The estuary of the Narenta, a deep and safe bay confined by the Dalmatian coast, the peninsula of Sabbioncello and the island of Lesina is rich in good anchorages—Porto Tolero, Neum, Stagno Piccolo, Drace, Valle Orkvice, Porto Trappano—and of noteworthy trade centers—Klek valley, Duba bay, Bratkovika valley, Osobliava valley, Diva bay.

¶ In the estuary itself Fort Opus, about six miles from the coast, offers an excellent anchorage. The quay of masonry will accomodate four steamships of medium size moored end to end.

¶ The port of Metkovitch contains anchorages more than four meters deep. It will accommodate steamships of average draught. There are two strands each 200 meters long, with spur railway tracks. The city is the terminus of the Mostar railroad, a trip of three hours, and the Gabela railroad running to the Mouths of Cattaro. During the war the railroad was extended to the harbor of Narenta which separates the railroad station from the city. The railroad has built two warehouses, making four in all with a capacity of 2,000 tons of



merchandise. Along the new quay between the railway station and the bridge five steamships can be moored end to end at the same time. Along this shore the rough ground will permit the storage of 7,000 cubic meters of merchandise.

### Gravosa Opens on an Inlet

¶ The port of Gravosa opens on an inlet the southern end of which is not more than two and a half kilometers from Port Cassor, the harbor of Ragusa; but the railroad stops at Gravosa and does not reach Ragusa proper. Nevertheless the harbor of Ragusa might be considered as subsidiary to that of Gravosa from the view point of imports and exports, inasmuch as the connection between them is easy. The little landing places on the left bank of the Orubia estuary are more properly entitled to be called subsidiaries of the harbor of Gravosa.

¶ The harbor of Gravosa with a basin having anchorages exceeding four meters in depth has a total area of about 16 square miles. It is well protected from the winds, especially in the inner part, and is not subjected to tides. It has a quay for timber 200 meters long with a draught of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 meters. There is also a quay for smaller steamships. There are abundant anchorages.

¶ The port of Ragusa boasts of a breakwater forty meters long with a draught of four meters. There is also an inner harbor which will receive light draught steamers. The old harbor can be considered as a tributary to the harbor of Gravosa; for while it is true that they are 14 kilometers apart, it is equally true that the Cattaro-Metcovitch railroad passes within three miles of the old harbor at the Zvekovica station. Thus it could co-operate in supplying freights. The port has a short quay with a draught of four meters alongside. It is used by local steamers. In the center of the harbor the soundings reach 20 meters.

¶ The Mouths of Cattaro comprise one of the safest, most beautiful and spacious natural harbors in the world. The harbor of Castelnovo di Cattaro though small has depths exceeding four meters. The anchorage at Zelenika, the railroad terminus, should be considered as tributary to the harbor of Castelnovo. It is about 543 acres in extent. In front of the railway station there is a quay 100 meters long.

### Zelenika Improved by the War

¶ During the war the anchorage at Zelenika underwent many alterations. There is a breakwater 110 meters long with

soundings alongside averaging seven meters. Enormous warehouses have been built to supply the Austrian troops operating in Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania. A railroad branch of narrow gauge was in process of construction to connect Zelenika with Gienovitch, but only the stretch from Zelinka to Kumbur was completed.

¶ At the latter place enormous hangars were constructed which might be converted into warehouses for merchandise.

¶ Besides these harbors the new Jugo Slav group has control of the ports of Antivari and Dulcigno, and the more important one of San Giovanni di Medua, which with the harbors of Dalmatia and Croatia give it practically unlimited access to the sea.

¶ A survey of the figures showing the trade movement of the Dalmatian harbors before the war will lead to interesting conclusions. Until 1913—the year to which the documents consulted extend—the movement of the Dalmatian harbors attained 20.6 per cent of the total business of the harbors of the dual monarchy. In other words more than a fifth of the commerce of Austria-Hungary was carried on through Dalmatian ports. That was the case—it should be considered well—up to the end of the war while Austria-Hungary still formed an intact country, and its exports and imports did not encounter any obstacle in following their natural channels, that is the most convenient, economical and shortest routes.

¶ This should not be understood to imply by any means that Jugo Slavia ought to renounce all use of the northern seaports of the Adriatic. Nobody will ever try to prevent the Jugo Slavs from shipping their exports, or receiving their imports through Fiume. It does not follow, however, that in order to permit the Jugo Slavs to export a small percentage of their farm products through its harbor, Fiume, an Italian city, should be joined to Croatia.

### Fiume a Free Port for Centuries

¶ Italy, with a far more enlightened government than that of Croatia or untried Jugo Slavia, is ready to offer the Jugo Slavs the same harbor facilities at Fiume as it offers at Trieste and Genoa to the trade of Switzerland and Southern Germany, and the other countries of Central Europe. This will be true especially if Fiume should become a free port, as is the desire of every Italian.

¶ A free port would be nothing new for Fiume. It enjoyed the advantages of a free port from the remotest times, and ceased to be one only in 1891.

¶ Emperor Charles IV., improving the wise counsels of the great Prince Eugene of Savoy, undertook to promote and increase the industries and trade of his country. In 1717 he ordered that ships should have free ingress and egress at all Austrian ports, and free navigation throughout the Adriatic. He offered immunities and privileges to all who should come to establish themselves in his dominions, and regulated the use of the highways which led from the interior to the sea. After making these provisions he decided to select one or two harbors on the Adriatic to become the emporiums of Austria, and at the same time proclaimed Trieste and Fiume free ports.

¶ If Charles had given a strong impetus to Fiume's commerce, his daughter, Maria Theresa, was destined to raise it to a degree of prosperity it never had known. Charles granted privileges to commercial companies, immunities to foreigners and proclaimed the port free. Maria Theresa followed closely by proclaiming the freedom of trade and traffic. She extended the customs immunity to the city and territory and granted personal immunities to all. She abolished tolls, except that on wine, and enacted wise laws to develop commerce and shipping. The reign of Maria Theresa was a period of great prosperity for Fiume.

### Germany Puts End to Free Port

¶ The free ports of Fiume and Trieste continued to flourish at the expense of Germany. Bohemia, Southern Bavaria, Tyrol, Stiria, Carniola and the other provinces of Austria diverted their commerce toward the Adriatic, because Trieste and Fiume have about the same relation to the valley of the Danube that Hamburg and Rotterdam have to the valley of the Rhine. Germany, which did not wish or was not able to meet the competition of Trieste and Fiume, compelled Austria-Hungary to abolish the two free ports in the Adriatic. Thus Hungary, bowing to the commercial supremacy of Germany, took away the free port in 1891, and established in its place the so-called free point.

¶ The transformation of the harbor, city and territory of Fiume, an area about 20 kilometers square, into an Italian free port would be the strongest guarantee that the trade of the hinterland would receive its fullest freedom of movement.

¶ Above all, Fiume, as an Italian free port, would be saved from economic ruin. If Croatia did not export through Fiume



more than seven per cent of its products, Jugo Slavia which would extend north and south far beyond Croatia alone would export still less; and Fiume, losing instead of increasing its trade, would face depression and a sure decline. The decline of the city would mean the decline of its industries and commerce, because it should be repeated often that Fiume is a thriving industrial center. The demoralization of Fiume's industries would reduce thousands of families to want, and bring suffering on 15,000 operatives, both men and women, who find steady employment in the little town.

¶ Furthermore overwhelming proof of what Fiume would be in the hands of the Croats may be found by looking at what it was in the distressing period between 1848 and 1867, a period of decay and impoverishment, which was followed by speedy recovery and rehabilitation as soon as it was returned to the rule of Hungary.

### Sees No Help From Jugo Slavia

¶ Fiume, not Italian, would run another grave danger. Not being, and not able to become the natural outlet of Jugo Slavia because of its geographical situation, the market of Fiume without a doubt would soon fall under the control of German capital. Through the ponderous commercial organization of Germany its utility as an outpost in combatting German influences in the Balkans would be lost speedily.

¶ To illustrate one side of the question a simple incident will suffice. Jugo Slavia and Hungary are both pre-eminently agricultural. Between them brisk competition is sure to spring up to gain foreign markets. With Jugo Slavia in possession of Fiume it would be able to apply the same economic policies against Hungary which Hungary enforced against Serbia, with what prejudice and danger to European peace may well be imagined since the like has been known. Therefore in view of the advisability of adopting a policy looking to a long maintenance of peace, it would be wise to make sure that the countries which are rising on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy shall have the freest access to the sea.

### "Free City" Dreaded by Fiume Folk

¶ It follows that the metamorphosis of Fiume into a "free city" would be futile. The fulcrum of the problem lies in international guarantees that Italy will give the peoples of the hinterland the freest access to the sea. Once the problem of guarantees as an Italian free port is solved, the problem of Fiume will be solved. At the bottom, a "free city" in the



sense of its application to Fiume, means free in regard to the movement of commerce. Such a freedom of traffic would have its fullest guarantees, if the city should become an Italian free port. If it is useless to speak of Fiume as a "free city," it might not be useless to indicate the absurdity of such a scheme.

¶ A "free city" in the accepted sense is equivalent to a republic. Fiume would retain, as it does now, an administration for the affairs of state. Is it possible that a city of 50,000 inhabitants could have the economic and financial capacity to provide for all the kinds of service required by a growing harbor, city and surrounding country? Such a thing would be possible only by an increase of taxes out of all proportion to its wealth. It would ruin the city; and what then? Without an increase in taxes Fiume would be obliged to renounce its prosperity, its very title to existence, if it were made a "free city."

### Strikes Terror Into Citizens

¶ This is why the scheme to make Fiume a free city has struck terror into the hearts of its citizens, who, fearing for its commercial future, have replied with determination that they wish only one solution of the dispute—the union of Fiume to Italy. Besides, Fiume is necessary to Italy for a reason pre-eminently national. Fiume is the last Italian outpost in the Julian Alps, the extreme bulwark of Latin civilization. Fiume has been through long centuries an Italian radiating center in the Gulf of Quarnero. Volosca, Abbazia, Laurano, Albona, Moschiena, Veglia, Cherso, Arbe and other places have preserved their Italianism, thanks to the sturdy national character of the Gem of the Quarnero.

¶ Fiume as a "free city" would mean the destruction of Italianism on the eastern shore of Istria, on the islands in the gulf, and in Fiume itself. Fiume as a "free city" is inconceivable to an Italian; is repugnant to the soul of Italy. One must have been over there on the border of the country; must have struggled, and suffered with the love of Italy ever burning in his heart; must have endured endless sacrifices for the sacred ideals of Italy; must have inherited a magnificent national tradition; and hoped passionately for liberty and for Italy to understand the sorrow and despair of the people of Fiume in hearing others speak of a "liberty" which to them spells not slavery, but the death of everything Italian round about.

¶ A "free city" or any other mistaken solution of the burning question, will make Fiume the point of ignition, close to the frontiers of Italy and Jugo Slavia, where the clashing interests and passions of the two nationalities will attain violent expression. This is another reason why Fiume should be Italian. Where peace can be carried by virtue of the right, a firebrand of municipal strife and racial hatreds, imbued with all the characteristics of the Middle Ages from which they sprang, should not be thrown.

¶ As I have said, Fiume as an Italian city, will be in a position to challenge the respect and attention of the world.





## **"Self Determination"**

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**On April 18, 1819, Fiume voted a second time by plebiscite to be united to the kingdom of Italy. The commerce bodies, educational associations and sporting interests were unanimous in the desire. The city sent seventy odd telegrams to the Peace Conference in Paris, asking for the unconditional annexation of Fiume to Italy. The municipality and National Council sent this despatch:**

**"The National Council, which on October 30, 1918, solemnly claimed the union of Fiume to Italy, and placed its plebiscite under the protection of America, expects from the conference the vindication of its right, justice and liberty, that they be made inviolable according to the unanimous wish of the people of Fiume. In these hours, when the fate of Fiume is being decided, the national council appeals to the sense of justice of the conference, expressing its firm faith that the plebiscite, based upon the cardinal principles of President Wilson will be ratified by the conference. Fiume, which in 1720, 1779, in 1867, and in 1918, decided its own fate of itself, reaffirms by a plebiscite vote its indestructible right to self-determination, and its unalterable will to belong to Italy.**

**(Signed) "PRESIDENT GROSSICH."**